

## Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative

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**Early Care and Education Work Group - September 14, 2005, 10 a.m. to 12 Noon**

**Members Present:** Donna Alliston, Judy Clay, Diana Courson, Geania Dickey, Deborah Gangluff, Dana Gonzales, Joanna Grymes, Martha Hiatt, Sue Martin, Vicki Mathews, Martha Reeder Sandra Reifeiss, Vicki Shelby, Kathy Stegall, Ratha Tracy, Jody Viet-Edrington, Cara Walloch, Paula C. Watson, and Debbie Webb.

**Regrets:** Dee Cox and Kathy Mackay.

**Vicki Shelby and Sandra Reifeiss presided. The group made self-introductions.**

### **Agenda Item #1: Update on Curriculum Review**

**Discussion:** Diana Courson, Joanna Grymes, Sandra Reifeiss, and Kathy Stegall provided an update on the work of the Curriculum Review Committee formed by DHHS/DCCECE to review curriculum related to 3-5 year olds. Each publisher has been asked to present in a manner linked to the guidelines/benchmarks. In addition to presenting, the publishers were invited to participate in the curriculum fair in May. Approved curriculum is mandated for use by ABC programs and suggested for use for other programs.

The curriculum must meet certain criteria. There is some leeway for self-designed curriculum. A sub-group developed the criteria to be presented at the next meeting. The sub-group is a virtual committee, meeting by e-mail. In the past, there were no specific guidelines. Some companies are looking at our guidelines and making product changes. The Arkansas checklist has been shared with other states. Martha Reeder, Kathy Stegall, and Donna Alliston shared the checklist in June at the Birth to Three Institute during their presentation with the other states.

### **Agenda Item #2: QRS Sub-group Update**

**Discussion:** A QRS update sheet related to the work of the sub-group was distributed in the meeting packet. Martha Reeder indicated that the process for the people serving as consultants has been good. The work group members were encouraged to read the update sheet.

Martha Reeder also introduced Martha Heitt, who joined the Division from the Department of Health. She was involved early on in the AECCS grant. At the Department of Health, Martha Hiatt worked closely with Maternal and Child Health.

Martha Reeder also mentioned that in future correspondence, the new logo will be displayed reflecting the merger of the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services.

**Agenda Item #3: "Quality" Public Relations Campaign - Vicki Shelby and Debbie Webb**

**Discussion:** There needs to be an active public relations campaign. A small sub-group was formed to work with public relations. The QRS sub-group requested that this group be formed early in the process of developing the QRS system.

Debbie Webb indicated that she had worked closely with a local United Way in their PR program, born out of Success by 6, called "Born Learning," Website: <http://www.bornlearning.org>. She also had the privilege of attending a conference called, "Engaging Leaders" (Building Bright Futures for Young Children) that was part of the United Way, Success by 6, campaign. Website: [http://national.unitedway.org/files/pdf/sb6/sb6\\_conf\\_program.pdf](http://national.unitedway.org/files/pdf/sb6/sb6_conf_program.pdf)

Debbie shared her conference program containing materials related to the conference and other materials for all to view. The local group paid a marketing group to come up with the material used in their campaign. They have TV spots, public service announcements, print outs, billboard information, scripts, posters, bumper stickers, etc.

Debbie mentioned that on the back of the materials there are different examples of what they have done and what has worked for them. Debbie's background is not marketing, but she knows how to borrow from others. She reminded the group that there are lots of ways to get the message out.

There is a quality AD campaign going on now about choosing child care with "care." The need for a campaign before the QRS program begins was discussed. The materials passed around by Debbie are examples of what can be done. Debbie suggested that some of the materials be used as a guide. Other comments included:

- The rollout of the QRS system is important. We need a public awareness campaign.
- We need to define the audience and focus on whether parents or providers.
- Billboards are huge. We need to put signs wherever we can.
- Public Service announcements are good. PSA's are not free any longer.
- We have some folks in the state that have done this type of thing.
- We do not need to re-invent everything.
- We need to see the same message as some other groups.
- If a really effective campaign, we need to represent all the different entities.
- We need to build in a piece about accountability.
- This is going to be very costly.
- Just running one pre-made ad may cost \$20,000—it is a very expensive venture.
- TV stations do all the research for you. Newspapers are more expensive.
- In some areas, TV stations will do items for free.
- We need to look at regional/local things to get some free items.
- We need the experts to define the message and help get the biggest bang for the buck.
- The smaller group should lay out the process and decide what they want in RFP and plan out what they want first, second, third, etc.

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### Agenda Item #3, Continued: "Quality" Public Relations Campaign

#### Comments continued:

- The DHHS office of public information services can do some things.
- Funding will come from DHHS patching together some funding.
- There are some short items that this group can do while looking at the long term.
- One of the first things is to build a web site.
- The committee needs to lay the groundwork now—if nothing else, it may start a dialogue with parents.
- The committee needs to work with local communities.
- There is a need to investigate what type of PR program other groups are doing.
- A common logo is needed early on.
- A professional person is needed to advise the group.

Diana Courson stated that the ideal place to start is with the Quality Approved programs. Through the local AETN perhaps we can do panel discussions and have presentations to local PTA's. She also indicated that there are lots of things that can be done at the local level.

Kathy Stegall stated that she has made a promise to one center that in the local paper they will identify that they are a quality center. She also stated that the group may need some stand alone kinds of things.

The Public Relations Sub-groups will be the following persons:

Geania Dickey, Chair  
Vicki Mathews, (DHHS)  
Jody Viet-Edrington  
Thelma Jasper  
Vicki Stearns

It was also suggested that Kenetta Ridgell from Arkansas Advocates be invited to be part of the sub-group. After further discussion, it was decided that Vicki Mathews would send a letter out to all quality centers and collect information about what the centers are doing related to quality information. It was stated that most of the larger communities have United Way and they need to be a community partner. Also, it was suggested that Hometown Health is another good connection and others groups such as the Pediatric Association should be pulled in as the group looks for an AD agency.

### Agenda Item #4: Upcoming Plans for AECA - October 13, 14, and 15

**Discussion:** It was mentioned that on the Thursday, October 13, there are several events going on related to members of the Early Care and Education Work Group. Ready Schools will have a full day of workshops and the Strengthening Families Initiative Network will have a full day of training.

On Wednesday, October 12, there will be a meeting with the legislators related to Early Childhood. They are hoping that at least 150 people will be there. This is a good opportunity to talk "quality" to legislators.

**Agenda Item #4, continued: Upcoming Plans for AECA - October 13, 14, and 15**

**Discussion: Display.** It was mentioned that display space is limited. It was agreed that Jody Viet-Edrington would prepare a display. Suggestions for the display included:

- It should come from the Early Care and Education Work Group (not QRS).
- Make sure all information is positive.
- Use "Stairsteps to Quality" without putting tiers.

**Survey.** After discussion, it was agreed that there would not be any type of survey at the display table at AECA. The information will be secured elsewhere.

**Agenda Item #5: SFI Update - Martha Reeder**

**Discussion:** There is a SFI handout in the meeting packet. Members were encouraged to read the update. Martha Reeder mentioned that at the present time there is no money attached to the SFI, but this may change.

The programs will work on self-assessment of various components including, family support, professional development of staff, and other topics. As we work through the self-assessments, programs identify what they feel they need. There are a series of conference calls centered around self-assessment. Various people related to AECCS will be invited to participate on the conference calls as resource people. Martha also suggested that different people on the leadership team might want to adopt one of the programs.

The first part of SFI is working with self-assessment. All the SFI Network members have been administering the toolkit survey. The toolkit is the second part. It will be focused towards child care providers. Each month, we will touch base through a conference calls with all the network members.

The SFI Leadership Team will be invited to participate on October 13. Dana mentioned that on the last conference call there was a great deal of enthusiasm.

**Agenda Item #6: Calendaring and Adjournment**

**Discussion:** After discussion and reviewing of individual calendars, the following future meeting dates were decided.

<b>DATES:</b>	Tuesday, November 29, 2005, --	<b>TIME:</b>	1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
	Wednesday, January 11, 2006 --		Time and Place to be decided.
	Wednesday, February 8--		Time and Place to be decided
	Wednesday, March 8--		Time and Place to be decided

The QRS must be completed by March. At the next meeting date, the two sub-groups will meet in the morning and the full work group will meet in the afternoon.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.